NEWSWEEK
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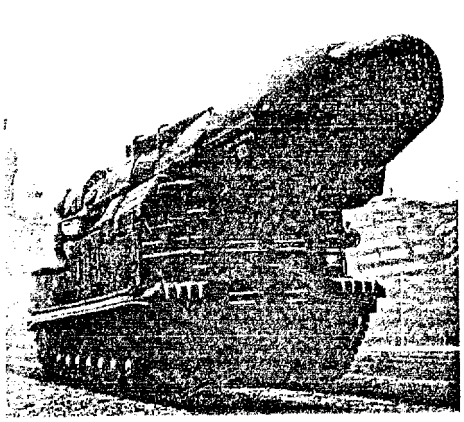
SALT II: AND NOW FOR THE BATTLE

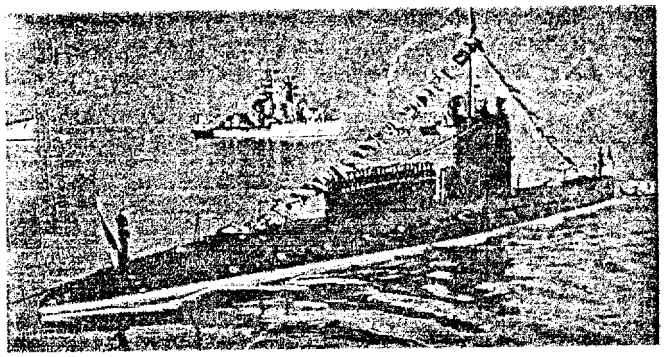
After nearly seven years of negotiations and countless premature predictions of success, the United States and the Soviet Union finally reached agreement in principle last week on a new treaty to regulate the strategic-arms race. The announcement of the breakthrough was oddly low-key, as though both Jimmy Carter and the Soviets had decided to let their aides juggle the hot potato that SALT II had become before they too, inevitably, would have to get their fingers burned in the debate over the treaty.

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance made the announcement in the White House press room on a sultry Washington afternoon. Defense Secretary Harold Brown, at his elbow, offered assurances that the pact would enhance U.S. security. No Russian diplomat was present, and the Soviets allowed almost a full day to pass before they reported the news to their own people. President Carter was a bit quicker to speak up. When he did so, he was enthusiastic to the point of hyperbole. "I have only one life to live on this earth, as you have," he told a morning-after breakfast meeting of slightly startled retail merchants. "I think the single most important achievement that could possibly take place for our nation during my lifetime is the ratification" of the treaty.

Brezhnev: A summit site close to home

CULMINATION: The 80-page, nineteen-article treaty, with its attendant thicket of protocols, footnotes and "common understandings," goes significantly beyond SALT I in setting both quantitative and qualitative limits on the two superpowers' long-range instruments of death and destruction. It represents the culmination of the most intense and prolonged groping toward a common purpose ever attempted by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and it more than justifies the first full-dress summit meeting between the leaders of the two countries in four and a half years.





A Backfire bomber (top), a missile in Red Square and a Soviet sub: Would the U.S. be outgunned under SALT II?

Because of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev's failing health, that meeting, which is scheduled for the middle of next month, will take place in Vienna—rather than in Washington, as protocol would have required—and will be a largely ceremonial affair centered on the initialing of the new strategic-arms pact. Carter will return home to lead the Administration's campaign for Senate ratification of SALT II—a test that promises to be as long, and possibly even in historical significance, Woodrow Wilson's failed campaign for Senate approval of U.S. participation in the League of Nations more than half a century ago.

Vance's announcement came at the end of five months of increasingly frequent meetings between himself and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin—the big, genial man who is one of the most influential foreign diplomats in Washington (page 38). When they met early last week in Vance's office on the seventh floor of the State Department, all but a few relatively minor Soviet demands were the last obstacles to completion of the SALT II agreement. Both unsettled questions concerned the U.S. arsenal of Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles:

- The Soviets wanted the U.S. to distinguish between the Minuteman II, which carries a single nuclear warhead, and the newer Minuteman III, which can carry three independently targetable re-entry vehicles, or MIRV's, in such a way that Russian satellites could tell which was which. Vance refused to include such assurances in the treaty.
- The Soviets asked the U.S. for a formal promise in the treaty that it would put no more than three warheads on the Minuteman III. The Pentagon had tested two of the missiles with seven warheads—but the Air Force decided that the missile had not performed well with that big a payload. Even so, Vance was instructed to press Dobrynin to accept a nonbinding statement saying that the U.S. had no intention to use more than three MIRV's on the Minuteman. Dobrynin held out for a formal ceiling.

Vance knew that he had a fallback position. President Carter had already authorized him to accept a formal treaty limitation on MIRVed Minuteman warheads if he had to. So after Dobrynin left, the Secretary called Carter at the White House. "We've just finished it," Vance said. "We've had an excellent meeting, and I want to come over and fill you in." "That's great news," Carter replied. "Congratulations."

The next day, Dobrynin returned to the State Department. When the Soviet ambassador stuck to his position on Minuteman warheads, Vance said the U.S. would accept a formal limit. That wrapped up the treaty. "Thank God, we have finally come to the end of the road," said Vance. Dobrynin, an atheist, smiled and replied: "Yes, we have, and I share your happiness." The two men reviewed some of the [illegible] during the past month and then summoned Marshall Shulman, Vance's chief Kremlinologist, to share

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in the moment of triumph. At the same meeting, Vance and Dobrynin compromised on Vienna as the summit site and they also set a date: June 15 to 18.

For more than a year, one issue after another that SALT optimists had considered either minor or already solved turned out to be unsolved—and apparently major. Even the cautious Vance committed a minor blunder last March when he predicted during a television interview that an agreement in principle was only a few days away. Despite the delay, the basic shape of the whole SALT II package that was announced last week was clear in September 1977. It embodies four main objectives:

- Ceilings on strategic launchers (missiles and bombers) with sublimits on MIRV's and heavy bombers armed with cruise missiles (chart, page 39).
- The first reduction from existing levels of stategic weapons—a reduction that in fact applies only to the Soviets, who will ultimately have to dismantle 270 of their older weapons.
- Constraints on qualitative improvements in various weapons, by barring increases in missile sizes and warhead loads.
- Basic parity between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in numbers (but not the power) of strategic weapons.

U.S. negotiators say SALT II will encourage a shift of Soviet nuclear strength away from land-based missiles—which are subject to instantaneous launch and not recallable—toward the more flexible and therefore "safer" air- and sea-launched weapons. They claim too that the treaty does not hamper any current U.S. plans for weapons development or modernization.

But the basic argument that Carter and other supporters of the treaty will make in the Senate debate is that the agreement is the only hope of putting a lid on an arms race that could quickly escalate beyond comprehension. As it is, SALT II gives both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. the theoretical ability to aim close to 20,000 nuclear warheads at each other—more than double the current totals. Without SALT II, that figure could escalate even more astronomically.

For an Administration that came to office with the utopian vision of eliminating *all* nuclear weapons, long months of thinking about what used to be called the unthinkable has induced a bone-weary depression, even in what should have been a moment of victory. "It's not enough," a State Department official said last week. "I look back and think how hard it has been to get this far—and even SALT II is not enough to get hold of this inexorable, suicidal march of nuclear weaponry."

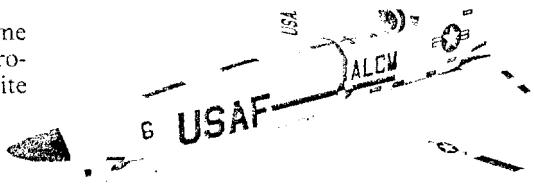
In fact, a handful of Senate liberals—Republican Mark Hatfield and Democrats George McGovern and William Proxmire—has threatened to vote against the treaty. In Senate speeches last March, all three vowed to do so if Carter sought to buy the treaty by loading up the defense budget with funds for the reactivation of the B-1 bomber, the new mobile MX missile system or other expensive sweeteners designed to bring their conservative colleagues—and the Joint Chiefs of Staff—into line behind SALT II. "We reserve the right to vote against any SALT proposal that does not fundamentally curb the arms race," the three proclaimed in a "Statement of Principle" that still guides their deliberations.

SALT II faces much more formidable opposition from such committed Senate hard-liners as Republican Jake Garn of Utah. "The treaty is so one-sided in favor of the Soviets that it threatens our nation's security," Garn said after the agreement had been announced. He claims to have at least 25 colleagues who will assist him in the effort to draft a substantive amendment that would force the Administration to renegotiate the treaty. "This is going to be a full-dress debate on a real foreign-policy issue," Garn pledged. "You'll see a deep and complete analysis of the treaty and its consequences."

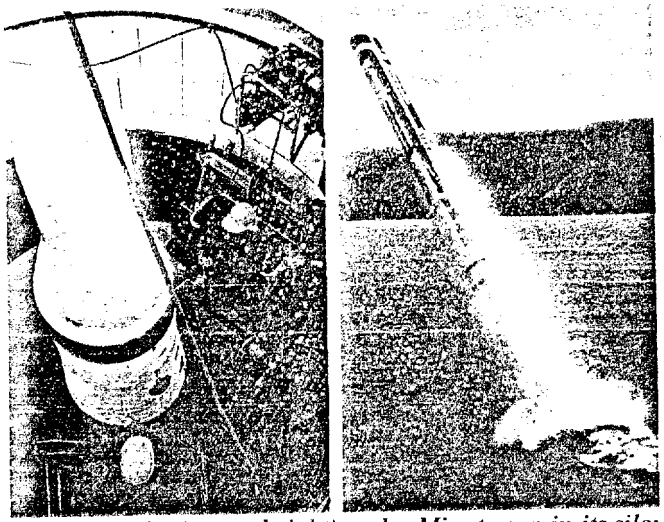
Republican leader Howard Baker of Tennessee—who says he has not yet made up his mind on SALT II—provided a rough confirmation of Garn's head count. "I doubt if there are 25 senators fully committed one way or the other," Baker said last week. That leaves Jimmy Carter well short of the 67 votes he needs for ratification. Among the dozens of complicated issues on which the moderates will be looking for leadership, two are paramount:

VERIFICATION. Any discussion about U.S. ability to monitor Soviet compliance with the terms of a major weapons agreement necessarily involves the kind of detail that stupefies most people but fascinates others for years. Take "telemetry encryption." This is SALTese for both countries' practice of coding some of the data beamed back to earth from their missile tests. Just before Christmas last year, it suddenly became one of the major glitches in the talks. The Soviets said the encoded stream of binary bits radioed from their tests was not relevant to U.S. verification. The U.S. said it had to have access to part of the stream. The problem was that the Russians were not sure what data the U.S. was asking them to send in the clear—and the U.S. was not about to tell them.

"I've never seen such a Catch-22 situation," one U.S. negotiator said. "We didn't want them to encrypt their telemetry, but



Carter: Facing a historical Senate test



Cruise missiles (top and right) and a Minuteman in its silo: U.S. weapons are more accurate—for now

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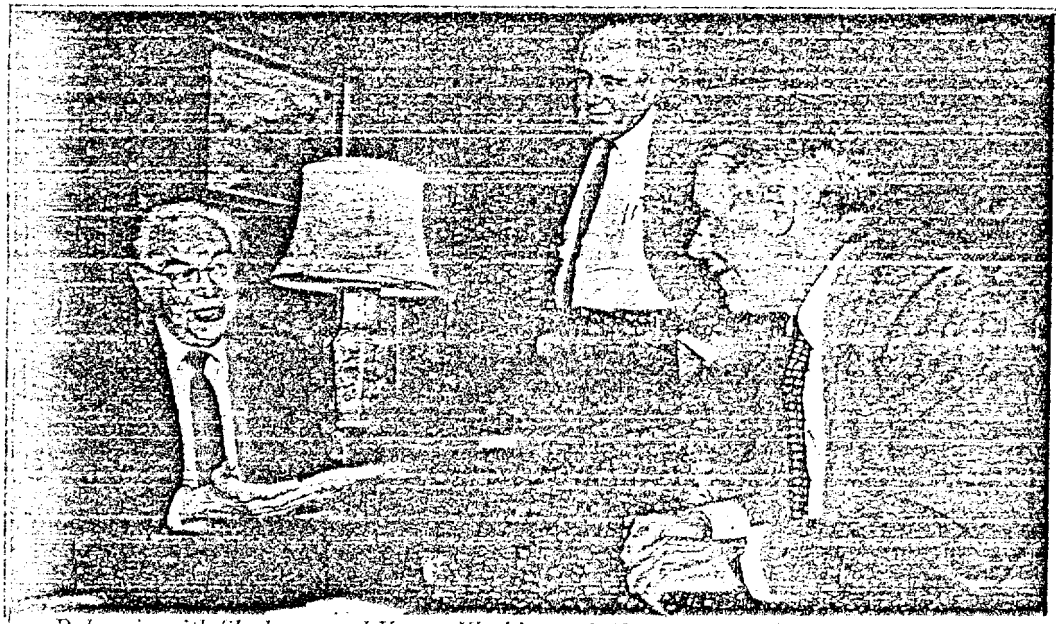
we had to be careful not to reveal what channels we were using. It's like telling them, 'Please don't blind our satellites,' and then having to add, 'Here's how you could blind them if you wanted to'."

In the end, the two sides pledged not to encode any missile data that would impede verification of the treaty. In another verification-related development, the treaty's proponents could conceivably get an unexpected boost with the recovery of the two electronic monitoring stations that were shut down by the upheaval in Iran. The bases measured the early-stage telemetry of Soviet missile launches, particularly such critical information as thrust and launch weights. NEWSWEEK has learned that the abandoned stations are at least partially intact. One senior official believes they are still in operation—although "nobody can read the take." It is a safe presumption that the U.S. is attempting to reacquire access to the bases, but as another official said, "No one is holding his breath."

MINUTEMAN VULNERABILITY. Sometime in 1983 or 1984, Soviet missiles will become accurate enough to effectively wipe out the U.S. Minuteman missiles in their silos—destroying one entire leg of the nation's "triad" of strategic weapons launched from land, sea and air. Whether by accident or design, Carter managed to put off the crucial decision on the U.S. response to that threat until after the announcement of the SALT agreement. The President could choose to do nothing, on the theory that even if the Soviets were certain they could wipe out the Minuteman leg of the triad, they still would face the prospect of unacceptable damage inflicted by U.S. bombers and submarine-launched missiles. At the other end of the scale, the Administration could push ahead with full-scale development of the mobile MX missile in a strategic nuclear "shell game."

As a way of reducing vulnerability, the Pentagon now favors the deployment of about 250 MX missiles in an open-trench system that would shuttle the missiles by railroad car among 5,000 hardened-concrete shelters spaced about a mile from one



Dobrynin with Shulman and Vance: Washington's 'favorite Bolshevik' can open any door

MOSCOW'S MR. FIXIT

Time and again in recent weeks, the Soviet Embassy's midnight-blue Cadillac rolled into the State Department garage—a rare privilege for foreign diplomats. Its passenger, a jovial bear of a man, ambled into a private elevator for a quick lift to the seventh-floor office of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. It was a familiar routine for Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, who met with Vance nearly 30 times in the last five months to settle the final details of the SALT II treaty. Dobrynin was the Kremlin's point man through years of wearing SALT talks. Unlike most diplomats, he never took notes—but he never once got a message wrong.

Anatoly Fyodorovich Dobrynin, 59, is Washington's "favorite Bolshevik," as W. Averell Harriman once described him. During his seventeen-year tenure as ambassador, Dobrynin has helped steer Soviet-American relations through the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam war and the ups and downs of détente. Dobrynin's diplomatic weapons are considerable. He has a good, even affectionate, understanding of America. And he is a trusted conduit between the U.S. and Moscow.

His main asset is instant access to top U.S. officials. "He's the most effective ambassador I've ever known. I hate the son of a bitch," says a very senior envoy who has had problems of his own on that score. Dobrynin's entree impresses old State Department hands. "He's got perks around this place you wouldn't believe," says one. "He can pick up the phone and tell Mr. Vance, 'I want to see you,' and he gets seen, right away. At the same time, he won't take a summons from anybody lower than the Secretary."

GO-BETWEEN: Dobrynin is a student of Broadway musicals, fast-food hamburgers and other Americana, and has traveled throughout the country. He has used that background to deal expertly with American leaders. He negotiated part of the recent exchange of two Soviet spies for five Soviet dissidents during casual give-and-take at the suburban home of national-security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. And many of his SALT sessions with Vance ended with an amiable chat over a glass of Scotch. "He's a first-class ambassador, an excellent representative," says Vance.

Dobrynin is a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee, but he does not have a seat on the real policymaking body, the Politburo. Although Dobrynin has mastered the details of SALT to the satisfaction of U.S. negotiators, some officials question whether the U.S. should rely on him as its principal go-between with Moscow. Washington's own ambassador to Moscow, Malcolm Toon, has not been given comparable access to Soviet leaders.

GOING HOME: The ambassador and his wife, Irina, have spent less than a decade in the Soviet Union since 1944, when Dobrynin was drafted into diplomacy from his job as an aeronautical engineer. With SALT II negotiated, he may finally go home for good. Kremlinologists once believed he might become Foreign Minister. But it appears that Dobrynin has more support in the U.S. than he does back home—an ironic price to pay for remarkable success as Moscow's man in Washington.

STEVEN STRASSER with LARS-ERIK NELSON in Washington and FRED COLEMAN in Moscow

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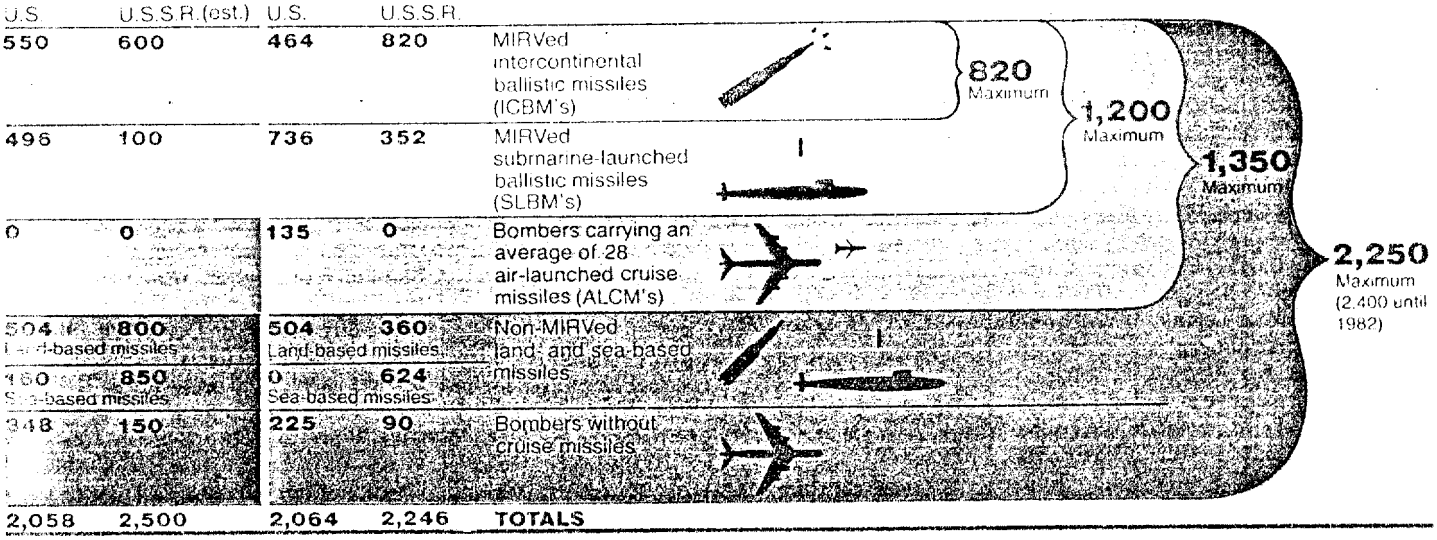
A CEILING ON THE ARMS RACE

SALT II sets an over-all limit that will require the Soviet Union to scrap some of the older weapons in its current arsenal. Both the U.S. and Russia can deploy more new missiles, but sub-limits restrict the most lethal weapons on both sides.



another. If Carter approves such a costly scheme, he risks losing the support of McGovern and a few other liberals in the Senate. But as one Senate SALT watcher predicted: "If the President makes a clear decision against MX, it will be a major—in fact, a killing—blow to ratification."

Although the stated objective of both sides during the negotiations was to achieve strategic parity, the Senate debate will turn on the question of which nation gains the most from SALT II. The treaty limits MIRVed intercontinental missiles—the most important element in the Soviet arsenal—to a little more than one-third of the total weapons permitted. But the Soviet missiles are far larger than any American weapons, and in terms of the size and explosive power of missile warheads, the U.S. will be badly outgunned.

KEY PROTOCOL: Currently, the American weapons make up for the difference through greater accuracy. But the Russians are improving steadily on that score. And a key protocol to SALT II, expiring at the end of 1981, hampers further technological advances by barring the flight-testing or deployment of land-based mobile missiles and the deployment of long-range cruise missiles fired from land or sea. In an interview with NEWSWEEK (following story), Carter's former chief arms-control negotiator, Paul Warnke, insisted: "The treaty is more than adequate at the present time." But former Navy Secretary Paul Nitze, a leader of the anti-SALT forces, warned that the treaty provisions "are not equal" and that the U.S. is the loser.

The undecided senators will look for guidance not only to Baker and his Democratic counterpart, Majority Leader Robert Byrd of West Virginia, but also to Frank Church of Idaho, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and to John Glenn of Ohio and Sam Nunn of Georgia, two Democrats who have earned their colleagues' respect for their serious study of defense matters. All five men claim to be uncommitted. But in a major speech the day after the agreement was announced, Church virtually endorsed the pact. He warned especially against attempts to sabotage the treaty by amendment. "To hang reservations on it is not to string decorations on a Christmas tree," Church said. "It is to topple the tree."

Byrd is also thought likely to emerge—much later in the debate, and only with misgivings—as a Presidential ally. Glenn's particular worry is verification. Nunn has made it abundantly clear that he is disenchanted with the over-all state of U.S. strategic preparedness. Last week Baker said, as he has for weeks, that he is uncommitted but leaning against the pact. Because he was crucial to the Administration's campaign for Senate approval of the Panama Canal treaties, the Minority Leader is looking for a way to redeem his standing with his own party's conservative wing, and he speculated openly about offering just the kind of stiffening amendments Church warned against.

Some top White House aides assert that no one with Presidential ambitions—such as Baker—has anything to gain by sabotaging SALT. "If he's instrumental in killing the treaty," said one of them of Baker, "he can't be President." But, admitted another top Presidential adviser, "If we lose Howard Baker, Sam Nunn and John Glenn, then we'll be dead in the water."

PRESIDENTIAL PLEA: It may come to that. But no senator will vote against SALT merely because the White House failed to press its case. In a handwritten note from the President, top Administration officials were ordered to lobby hard for ratification. And within hours after Vance's telephone call announcing the agreement, a selling campaign outlined months ago and enshrined in a black binder was activated. And well before Vance and Brown appeared at the White House, all 100 Senators had received a letter from Carter, along with a blue loose-leaf notebook embossed with a gold Presi-

Baker, Byrd and Nunn: Would the Senate's reservations topple the treaty?

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dential seal and entitled "SALT II Reference Guide." The letters had been signed by the President at 5:30 that morning. They included a plea Carter had written himself: "If you have any concerns or questions about the details of the treaty or about its strategic benefits to the United States, I trust that you will give me an opportunity to discuss these matters with you before you make a final judgment."

The entire Senate also will be invited to buffet suppers and tours of the SALT horizon by Carter, Vance, Brown and company beginning this week. When aides suggested that the list be pared down by eliminating declared opponents like Garn, Carter wrote a note to top political adviser Hamilton Jordan saying, "We cannot give up on these either."

OFFENSIVE: An Administration public-relations offensive aimed at persuading the country to persuade their senators has already begun. Nearly 700 "national leaders" will be ushered into the White House between now and the summit for coffee, tea and persuasion on SALT. Carter called former Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford with word of the agreement. Henry Kissinger, who got a personal call from Vance, will get more of the same. "He could be a help," one White House aide said. "But his potential for harm is even greater." In a recent interview with The Economist of London, the former Secretary of State was careful not to come out against SALT II. But he spoke of the 1980s as "an era of grave danger" because of weapons advances by the Soviet Union.

Baker and Byrd both pledged to move the treaty as expeditiously as possible through the Senate. "I don't want it to be anybody's political football," said Byrd, "and that goes for the Presidential candidates of both parties"—a formulation that pointedly included Jimmy Carter, whose aides think much of his re-election appeal rests on the peace issue. As it is, hearings on the treaty in the Foreign Relations and Armed Services committees won't get under way until the end of next month and will drag on through July and probably beyond. Even under the most favorable circumstances, the final Senate vote is not expected until late in the fall.

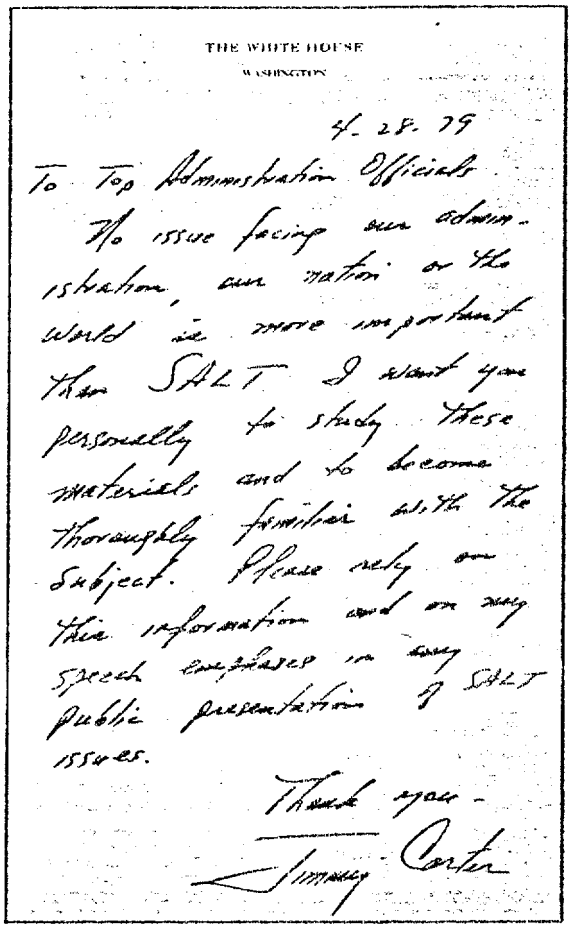
BREZHNEV'S SHOW: Next month's summit will probably not affect the debate in any major way. The Soviets announced that the meeting had been "tentatively" scheduled for June 15-18. Later they firmed up the date, but their initial caution reflected the fact that precise treaty language must still be worked out—and that Leonid Brezhnev is in fragile health. His infirmities, including heart trouble, seem to be worsening. In recent weeks, he has been capable of only about [illegible] programed concentration in the morning and another in the afternoon.

Brezhnev long ago eliminated all rivals on the Politburo. He has designated no clear successor, and the leadership obviously finds it simpler to keep him functioning—with the bulk of his workload divided up—than to face up to the inevitable crisis of naming a new leader. U.S. summit planners got no response to hints that they would like to widen the summit talks to include younger leaders. It will be Brezhnev's show.

In addition to signing the treaty, Carter and Brezhnev will agree on a side-letter restricting the Soviet Backfire bomber. The warplane is not covered by SALT II, and U.S. critics of the treaty insist that it is a dangerous strategic weapon. The side-letter will limit Backfire production to the current rate of 30 a year and also restrict improvements that can be made in the bomber's capabilities. The two leaders also will discuss future arms-control agreements, trade and such trouble spots as Africa and the Middle East. The talks may be inconclusive, given Brezhnev's health, but there is no reason to think they will be antagonistic. If Carter is to be bloodied soon by the superpower rivalry, the damage will be done not in Vienna, but on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

If the Senate rejects the treaty—or attempts negotiation of what one treaty supporter scornfully calls "SALT 2.5"—Carter would not be the only loser. The Pentagon estimates that the American taxpayer would have to furnish an additional $10 billion to $30 billion for strategic weapons by 1985 to deal with the uncertainties of a superpower rivalry without rules. Carter's Presidency would be damaged—to say nothing of his chances for re-election—since it would be much more difficult for the President to negotiate treaties with the Kremlin on any subject if the Senate overrules his judgment on this one.

Failure to ratify might also tempt the Soviets to try to reach a separate military accommodation with Western Europe. As Samuel Huntington, who recently left the National Security Council to become director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, puts it: "The Soviets could tell our allies, 'It's too difficult to negotiate with the Americans. If you Europeans are interested in arms control, you and we should sit down and talk about it'."



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

4-28-79

To Top Administration Officials

No issue facing our administration, our nation or the world is more important than SALT. I want you personally to study these materials and to become thoroughly familiar with the subject. Please rely on this information and on my speech emphasis in any public presentation of SALT issues.

Thank you -

Jimmy Carter

Memo from the President: A hard sell for SALT

U.S.S.R. ON TRIAL: Since the first arms-control treaties, the SALT process has been seen, rightly or wrongly, as a test of U.S.-Soviet relations. The fate of the treaty may well hinge on Russian behavior around the world during the course of the debate. "One of the things you let [the Soviets] know at the summit," one Administration aide said last week, "is that a SALT treaty isn't a license to hunt someplace else in the world." Whether they like it or not, the Soviet leaders will themselves be on trial during the protracted Senate debate that got under way last week. As a White House lobbyist put it wistfully: "If only the Russians would go on a six-month vacation. They've just got to understand that the tolerance level for their activities around the world is virtually nil."

The temptation to see the SALT debate as a microcosm of the larger East-West struggle arises naturally from the technical intricacy of arms control—and from the nearly unimaginable horrors of nuclear warfare itself. So far, however, most Americans have not become engrossed in the complex debate. For many, SALT is a bore; only 23 per cent of the respondents in a recent CBS poll were able to name correctly both of the countries involved in the negotiations. But 100 members of the U.S. Senate are paid and pledged to confront the unthinkable head-on. Perhaps the most hopeful sign, at the outset of a debate that Senator Garn described as "the most important issue I have ever dealt with in public life," was that the major players seemed to be determined to judge SALT II coolly and on its merits.

DAVID BUTLER with LARS-ERIK NELSON, ELEANOR CLIFT, DAVID C. MARTIN and JOHN J. LINDSAY in Washington and [illegible] in Moscow